

Montgomery County Council

From the Office of Councilmember Phil Andrews

For Immediate Release

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Restaurant Revenues and Applications Up One Year after Montgomery County's Smoking Ban

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Sales tax receipt and restaurant application data released today by Montgomery County Councilmember Phil Andrews (D-Gaithersburg) show that both increased significantly in the year following Montgomery County's smoking ban in restaurants, the first such law in the Washington D.C. region.

In the first full year following the October 9, 2003 smoking ban, sales tax receipts of Montgomery County restaurants increased by \$4.4 million (from \$57.7 million to \$62.1 million), up 7.6% from the twelve-month period preceding the ban, according to information provided by Montgomery County restaurants to the State Comptroller. The County's restaurant applications increased from 80 to 87 in the same period, up 8.7%, according to the County's Public Health Service.

"Montgomery County's indoor air is the safest in the region because of our Smoke-free Restaurant Law," said Andrews, who was the lead sponsor of the measure. "Restaurant employees no longer have to sacrifice their health for a paycheck, and patrons know that the air they breathe will be at least as safe as the food and drink. Moreover, the data shows that the bottom line of the restaurant industry remains healthy. These results should encourage lawmakers in Annapolis, Washington D.C., and Richmond to act now in providing the same protection from dangerous secondhand smoke to all restaurants workers and patrons in Maryland, the District of Columbia, and Virginia."

Since Montgomery County's smoking ban took effect, the cities of Rockville, Takoma Park, and Gaithersburg have approved and implemented smoke-free restaurant laws, as has Talbot County. In the past few years, dozens of local jurisdictions across the United States, and six states -- Connecticut, Delaware,

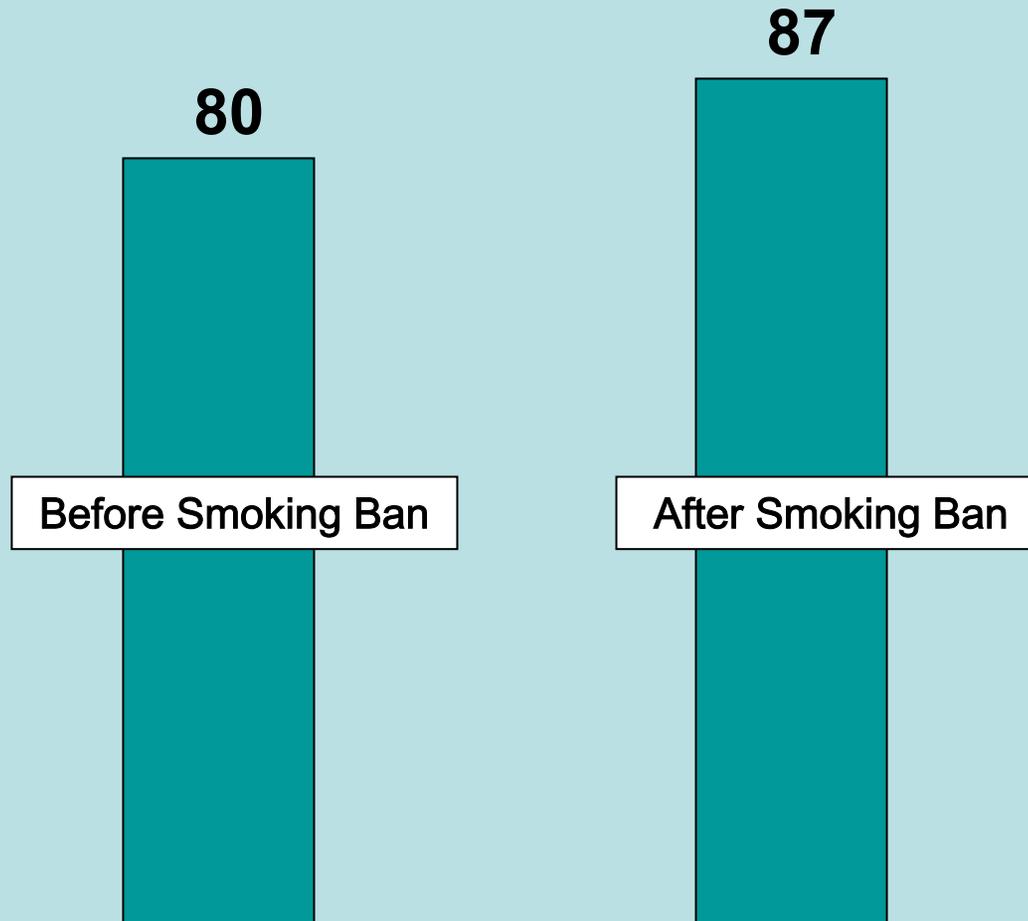
Maine, Massachusetts, New York, and Rhode Island – have joined California in requiring that all workplaces, including restaurants and bars, be smoke-free. Internationally, several countries, including Ireland and Italy, have recently done the same.

On February 24, the Senate Finance Committee of the Maryland General Assembly is scheduled to hold a public hearing at 1 p.m. on a bill that would require that all indoor workplaces in Maryland be smoke-free. Montgomery County's experience is expected to be a focus of the public hearing. In 2004, a similar bill came within one vote of passing the Senate Finance Committee. The bill will likely pass the General Assembly if it wins Committee approval. A professional statewide poll conducted in 2003 by QV Analytics found that 67% of Marylanders support a state smoke-free workplace law.

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Restaurant Applications Up 8.7%

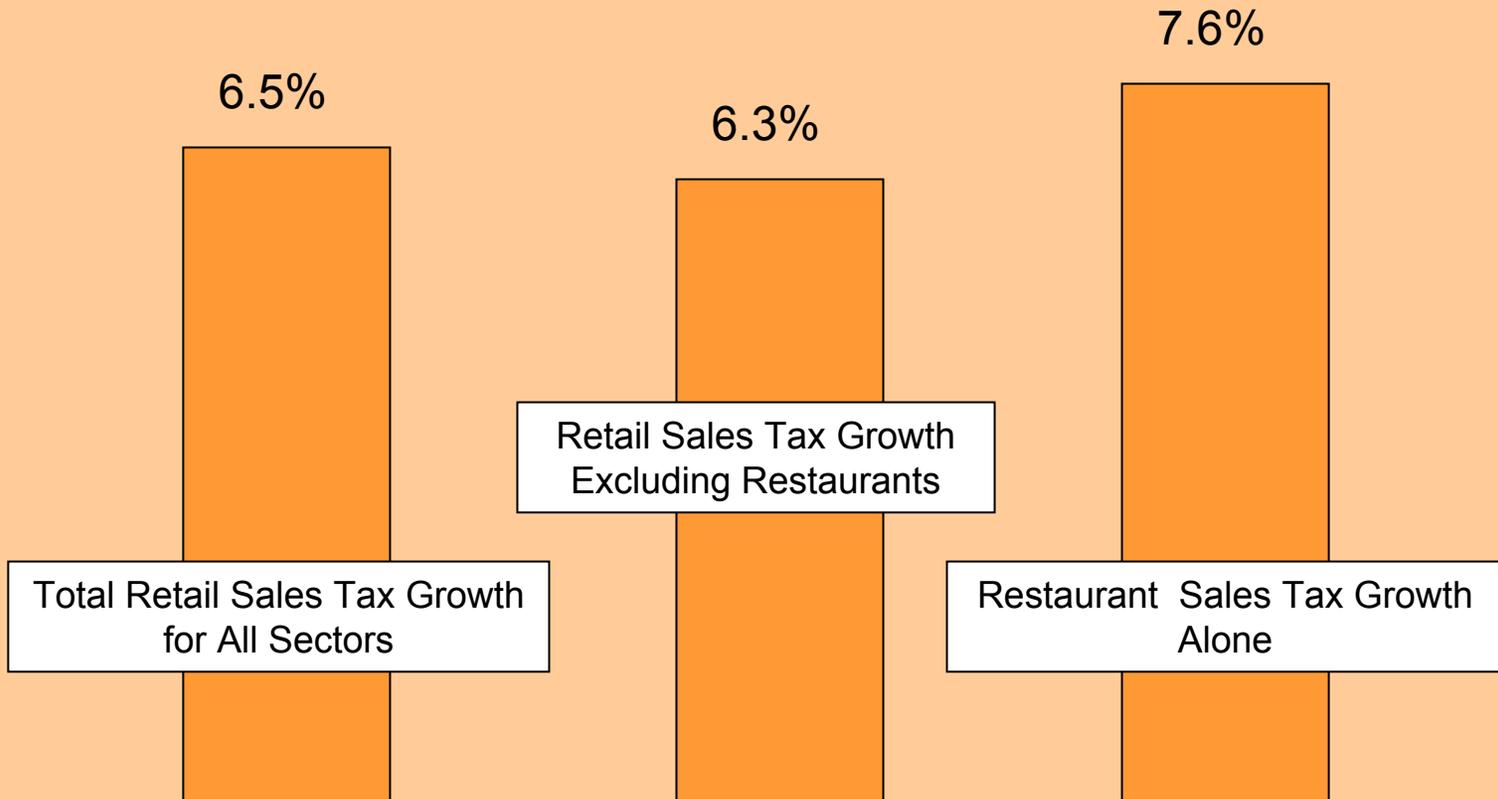
in Montgomery County in First Year After Smoke-Free Law



Oct. 9, 2002 thru Oct. 8, 2003 compared to Oct. 9, 2003 thru Oct. 8, 2004
(Smoke-Free Restaurant Bill Took Effect on October 9, 2003)

Restaurant Sales Tax Growth Exceeds Growth for Total Montgomery County Retail Sales in Year After Smoking Ban

Percentage of Growth Observed by Comparing Oct. '02 through September '03 Sales Tax Receipts with Oct. '03 through Sept. '04



Source: Montgomery County
Dept. of Finance